

Kristjánsson (K.) *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education*. Pp. x + 194. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. Cased, £55, US\$99.95. ISBN 978-0-7546-6016-3.

Kristjánsson (henceforth K.) is a moral philosopher with a long-standing interest in Aristotle, and whose recent books on pride and jealousy (2002), and justice-based emotions (2006), have a strong Aristotelian flavour. This book, according to the Introduction (chapter 1), aims to contribute to the field of 'values education', especially the 'character education' and 'social and emotional learning' trends, strong particularly in the USA. K. argues that, while many in the field pay lip service to Aristotelian inspiration, there is much muddled thinking about Aristotle's actual views on child rearing, moral education, and the place of emotions in the educational programme. K. takes at face value moral educators' desire for genuine Aristotelian grounding, and aims to show what Aristotle can (and cannot) contribute, in general strongly recommending him as a guide.

The following ten chapters examine specific issues: (2) the moral education of children; (3) whether one can develop *phronêsis* merely through habituation; (4) whether any emotions should be eradicated; (5) whether, and how, one should teach children to feel justified anger; (6) to what extent proponents of Emotional Intelligence can cite Aristotle in support; (7) whether emulation (of role models, or desirable character traits) is pedagogically a useful emotion; (8) whether parents and children can be true character friends; (9) whether generosity/charity is an Aristotelian virtue; (10) the extent to which agreeableness, manners and morality overlap; and (11) whether teaching is a *praxis*.

K. starts each chapter with an 'Assumption' that purports to be an amalgam of typical muddled thinking. For instance (chapter 2): "Aristotle does not really provide a coherent conception of childhood. He offers no systematic theory of moral development, and his idea of moral virtue is based solely on self-control: teaching children to flex their will-power muscles." (p15). To someone (like the present reader) not familiar with the above-mentioned pedagogical movements, it is hard to know to what extent these 'Assumptions' are straw men. However, even if they are an authorial conceit, they do usefully indicate the ground each chapter aims to cover. K. typically proceeds by drawing out relevant themes from (mostly) the *Ethics* and the *Rhetoric*, before moving on to give modern scholars' views, and arguing against these and for his own conception, finally concluding each chapter "Assumption X is wrong." Some chapters contain considerably more Aristotle than others: 2-5 and 7-8 will be of most interest to classicists.

Several chapters, however, almost seem to abandon Aristotle for extended critiques of modern scholars (e.g. Goleman p83-97, Kupfer p116-22). K.'s method of critique is frequently to group scholars into schools, label them, and then dismiss their arguments by means of the label. For instance, having stated (p157) that there are "three neo-Aristotelian sub-perspectives" in "educational circles" – the *ethos* perspective, the *logos* perspective (both dismissed in a paragraph), and the *phronesis-praxis* perspective (*PPP*) – he concludes: "The advocates of the *PPP* try to establish an anti-realist, non-foundationalist, perspectivist account of education and educational theory with reference to a philosopher whose epistemology and methodology are unabashedly realist, foundationalist (naturalist) and cosmopolitan." (p162).

In the Introduction K. states: "I do not pretend to be a classics expert, let alone an Aristotelian scholar, and my goals are not exegetical: I have unearthed no new readings of Greek texts or hit upon novel interpretations that are destined to shake the classics world. I rely on existing translations..." (p5). K. here neatly encapsulates (presumably to neutralise) several obvious criticisms of the book, reflecting aspects that do limit its usefulness to classics scholars. Classicists are also hampered by the index, which is mostly a list of modern scholars' names. 'Education' is not listed; 'emotions' is wrongly inset, so easy to miss; and 'Aristotle' is followed by "1-280", which is neither helpful nor accurate. The book will be of most use (in the classics

world) to undergraduates, or scholars approaching the subject for the first time, wanting an overview of relevant issues.

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